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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C. – Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL) today joined a bipartisan majority in the U.S. House of Representatives in passing landmark legislation that will extend and expand key initiatives to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria around the globe.

"The Lantos-Hyde U.S. Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization is a success for global health and human rights," said Rep. Gutierrez. "Disease knows neither borders nor boundaries. If we are to ensure the health of our country and take serious steps toward the eradication of these diseases, we must maintain a global approach."

Since documentation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic began in 1981, 20 million men, women and children around the globe have died from the disease, with about three-fourths of the deaths occurring in sub-Saharan Africa. Today, there are 40 million people around the globe who are HIV-positive. Each and every day, another 6,000 people become infected with HIV.

In May 2003, Congress enacted the bipartisan U.S. Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act (PL 108-25) – authorizing \$15 billion over five years for U.S. contributions to both bilateral and multilateral efforts. Over the last five years, this program has provided critical resources, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa – including life-saving drugs for almost 1.5 million AIDS patients and successful programs to prevent the spread of the HIV infection.

This bipartisan bill reauthorizes and expands this key initiative over the next five years, authorizing \$50 billion towards the development and implementation of strategies to transition from the current emergency phase to long-term sustainability that can be maintained by host countries. It also aims to prevent 12 million new HIV infections by 2013; provide life-saving drugs for three million AIDS patients; provide medical and nonmedical care for 12 million people (including 5 million orphans); and provide training for 140,000 new health care workers.

"We not only have an obligation to ourselves, but also a moral obligation to take this next step in fighting AIDS in the poorest countries of the world," Rep. Gutierrez said.

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